STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES #20

"NEW BEGINNINGS"

by

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First Draft 12/17/03

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StormWatch: Team Achilles
#20 “Meet the New Boss: Same As The Old Boss”
Written by Micah Ian Wright
First Draft
December 17, 2003

PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

Widescreen establishing shot of the exterior of the United Nations Palais Des Nations building (see reference page).

BORDERLESS LOCATION CAPTION
United Nations Palais Des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

PANEL TWO

Inside the building in the long hallway which runs around the building (see reference page). Several diplomats from several continents and dressed in suits or ethnic clothing styles stare in shock as Ben Santini walks out of a glowing Project Entry Circle, wearing his US Army Military Uniform, speaking into a cel phone..

SANTINI
Okay, Tefibi, I’m inside. Now what?

TEFIBI (CEL PHONE)
Turn East. The Director-General’s office is at the center of the hallway.

TEFIBI (CEL PHONE)
Before you do anything else, though, put the earpatch on the bone directly behind your ear.

PANEL THREE

C/U as Santini puts a small flesh-colored sticky bandage behind his right ear. It looks like one a small round band-aid, but instead of a bandage in the center, there is a thin layer of electronics.

SANTINI
It’s on.

TEFIBI (CEL PHONE)
Okay, SW One is going to say something into your earpatch.

EARBUD CAPTION
(this should be a TINY caption, colored the same color as Ben Santini’s Radio Talk captions, it’s just an indicator that information is passing to Santini)
...

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Santini walks down the hallway still talking on his cel. Diplomats stare in horror at him.

TEFIBI (CEL PHONE)
Did you hear that?

SANTINI
Yes.

TEFIBI
Good. No one else can. It works through bone induction... there’s no AUDIBLE signal outside of YOUR head. Keep any responses sub-vocal. The microphones hidden in your uniform will let us hear anything you say. Your chest-camera is also broadcasting perfectly.

PANEL FIVE

Santini at an ornately carved door. The title plaque reads “Secretary-General.”

SANTINI
(into cel)
I’m here. I’m hanging up the cel.

PAGE 2

PANEL ONE

Santini walks into the waiting room for the Sec-Gen. The SG's assistant stands behind her desk between Santini and a closed door to an inner office behind her. Her eyes are wide open in horror.

ASSISTANT
He's not here! Go Away!

SANTINI
Not likely.

PANEL TWO

From inside the office. Santini kicks in the door, the Assistant is pulling as his hair, dragging at his arm.

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
You busy, Mister Secretary-General? I really wanted to phone ahead for an appointment, but your phones are tapped.

ASSISTANT
I'm sorry, sir, I tried to keep him out!

SECRETARY GENERAL (O.S.)
Never mind, Madeline. You may go.

PANEL THREE

Santini sits down uninvited at the Secretary General's desk.

SANTINI
Want to hear a joke? It goes like this:
Knock knock.
Who's there?
The guy the Goddamned United Nations left out in the cold when you turned tail and let THE AUTHORITY take over the largest Democratic nation on the planet.

PANEL FOUR

The Secretary General looks down at his desk.

SECRETARY GENERAL
We do not have the force of arms necessary to stop them.

EARBUD CAPTION
...

2 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
You could have continued to fund TEAM ACHILLES. There are secret ways you could have funneled cash to us. WE could take care of the Authority, given the necessary financing.

PANEL FIVE

The Secretary-General is pissed, pounding his desk, messing up his neat papers.

SECRETARY GENERAL
StormWatch? The formation of your group was a decision by my PREDECESSOR. I was against it from the BEGINNING! I always suspected YOUR approach would lead to all-out war between Superheroes and humanity and NOW it almost has!

PAGE 3

PANEL ONE

Santini smiles and does the Executive Finger-Steeple.

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
So now YOUR cowardice in the face of the enemy is MY fault? MY team was designed to capture or kill superpowered criminals, rougue SPBs who the so-called Super "Heroes" wouldn't or couldn't do anything about. MY team has done their job extremely well.

SANTINI
It was YOU and the United Nations who chose to do NOTHING to prevent these six superpowered criminals from taking over the United States. YOU are the idiot who sent a clear signal to any superpowered megalomaniac that it's fine to take over their country. And now YOU refuse ME the funding necessary to stop THEM.

SANTINI
This isn't a ME problem, this is a YOU problem.

PANEL TWO

The Sec-Gen crosses his arms, angry.

SECRETARY GENERAL
You have come here in the uniform of a defeated military power, a uniform which you KNOW has been BANNED by The Authority. You MUST KNOW that your presence here will be reported to them. You endanger everyone in this building by remaining. I insist you leave IMMEDIATELY!

PANEL THREE

Santini rises to his feet.

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
Has it occurred to you, SIR, that the ONLY reason I came here today was to start a fight?

3 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
It's going to be very hard for the United Nations to maintain its precious non-involvement once the Authority shows up to kill me in your building and I tell them all about how you're funding Team Achilles.

PANEL FOUR

The Sec-Gen is horrified, he's up out of his seat.

SECRETARY GENERAL
You... you wouldn't dare!

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
Why not? MY country is already under these Superfucks' jack-booted heel... Let's see how much YOU like it. Besides, extending their rule to cover the rest of the world will stretch their resources all the thinner, making them easier targets for my team.

SECRETARY GENERAL
I can't believe you'd yoke 6 Billion people beneath those madmen's reign in the HOPES of distracting them long enough to KILL THEM! I'd heard the stories, Santini, but they don't do you justice. You are an EVIL BASTARD!

PANEL FIVE

Santini smiles at the Sec-Gen as he steps to the office door.

SANTINI
Thank you for noticing, sir.

PAGE 4

PANEL ONE

Santini in the hallway, talking on the cel phone.

SANTINI
Okay, Tefibi, go ahead and lift your cel phone and landline call blocks.

SANTINI
It'll be amusing to see how long it takes for these U.N. Weasels to betray me.

MIDNIGHTER (O.S.)
Not very long, actually.

PANEL TWO

Large panel. Reverse angle. Santini stands tall as THE ENGINEER & THE MIDNIGHTER step out of an Authority Door.

MIDNIGHTER
Seems they're more afraid of US than they are of YOU.

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
That's their mistake.

ENGINEER
Benito Santini, you're under arrest.

SANTINI
Name the crime.

ENGINEER
We don't need to. As the new rulers of the United States, we've declared you an enemy combatant. You therefore have no civil rights.

MIDNIGHTER
I think you'll really like your new home in Camp X-Ray, Cuba.

SANTINI
IF you can put me there. Come on, let's do this.

PANEL THREE

Close on the crouching Midnighter and The Engineer standing next to him. She's transformed her hand into a flatbed holographic display. Floating above it is an overhead map of the building.

4 CONTINUED:

Little blue dots representing people are clustered all over the place. In the background, Santini stands still, not moving.

MIDNIGHTER
Is he alone?

ENGINEER
There’s no one with a gun within a mile of the building except some security guards and they’re not going to go out on a limb to save him.

MIDNIGHTER
Then let’s take him apart. Come on, Santini... resist arrest, just a little.

PAGE 5

PANEL ONE

Big panel. A blurred-out Midnighter leaping through the air at Santini, one foot out to kick him in mid-torso...

NO DIALOG

PANEL TWO

A hole opens up in Santini's chest around Midnighter's leg. Teeth grow out of his skin around the hole...

MIDNIGHTER
Heh?

PANEL THREE

...and CHOMP the hell down on Midnighter's leg. Midnighter is suspended in mid-air, his leg stuck in the middle of Santini's torso.

MIDNIGHTER
Yaeeeegggh!

EARBUD CAPTION
...

SANTINI
Looks like you bit off a little more than you can chew, Midnighter.

PANEL FOUR

Close-in as Midnighter's fist BLURS OUT as he punches Santini HARD in the face, the type of blow which would kill any normal man.

MIDNIGHTER
Hwaaa!

SANTINI
Uhhhf!

PAGE 6

PANEL ONE

Santini’s face is smushed, but not broken... like a cartoon face on silly putty when you push it inwards. Santini smiles.

SANTINI
Not bad. Would have killed a normal man.

MIDNIGHTER
You’re not Santini!

SANTINI
Ding Ding! Give the moron an award! Bravo Team, GO.

PANEL TWO

Large panel. FLINT falls out of a Project Entry Portal above and behind The Engineer. The Engineer has turned her arm into some horrible-looking weapon. Flint is carrying an Iraquois War Club made of some kind of dense black metal (see the reference page).

ENGINEER
(to midnighter)
Midnighter! Get out of the way, I can’t target him!

PANEL THREE

Flint makes a horribly angry face as she HAMMERS the top of The Engineer’s head with ball of the war club. The Engineer’s eyes roll back in her head, stunned.

FLINT
Hrrrrraaaaagh!

ENGINEER
Urk!

PAGE 7

PANEL ONE

In the foreground, is Flint from the knees down, her boot on the side of the engineer’s head. In the background, the Midnighter struggles with the fake Santini (it’s Codename Alias). Alias is tying Midnighter up with his arms. Draw the Mr. Fantastic fights Wolverine poses you’ve always longed for deep in your heart here, CP.

ENGINEER
Ehhn... whas happ-

PANEL TWO

Same shot. The Iroquois war club comes down and SLAMS the Engineer in the back of the head. In the background, The Midnighter has his hands around Santini’s throat, but Santini now has four heads and six arms, all of them punching Midnighter.

ENGINEER
KUGHK!

PANEL THREE

Flint picks up the unconscious Engineer by one leg and one arm and swings her in a circle.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

...and lets her go, right into a Project Entry Portal.

NO DIALOG

PAGE 8

PANEL ONE

Thin panel. C/U shot on the Midnighter/Codename Alias fight. Midnighter is thrashing wildly in Alias' grip, but he's too wound up to really struggle much. Both of his arms are pinned

MIDNIGHTER
Kill... You!

CODENAME ALIAS
Yeah, yeah, whatever. I wouldn't waste my air if I were you.

PANEL TWO

Flint walks up to Alias & Midnighter, her war club over her shoulder.

CODENAME ALIAS
Where'd you send her?

FLINT
Liberia. I wanted her to see a country that REALLY needs to be taken over by benevolent superpeople.

MIDNIGHTER
Victoria? What are you... doing with these people?

FLINT
Protecting humanity from people like you. We may have been teamates once, but that was before you took it upon yourselves to rule the planet.

MIDNIGHTER
America!

FLINT
What's the difference?

PANEL THREE

Pull out. The REAL Ben Santini walks out of one of a Project Entry portal next to The Midnighter (slowly suffocating under the crush coils of Codename Alias' tightly-coiled arms.

SANTINI
I want you to understand that the only reason I'm not holding you captive is because your friends would move Heaven and Hell to free you and I can't afford the distraction.

8 CONTINUED:

MIDNIGHTER
Then... why not... kill me?

SANTINI
Because you're one of the six people whom I want to someday take over China, kill its leadership and install a Democracy.

PANEL FOUR

Midnighter's eyes beginning to roll up into his head as he chokes out.

MIDNIGHTER
You're... no better... than US!

SANTINI
Well, unlike YOU, I never claimed to be. Look, I'll make you a trade: leave America, take over China. America has 228 years of practice with Democracy. China has none. America will elect a better President, China CAN'T. Make the trade and I'll go away and leave you alone.

MIDNIGHTER
And... If... don't?

SANTINI
Patrick, show him what happens if they don't.

PAGE 9

PANEL ONE

Codename Alias sprouts 3-foot spikes all over his body, piercing Midnighter in three dozen different places.

CODENAME ALIAS

Fffftttttt!

MIDNIGHTER

(screams BIG)

Yeeeeaaaaaaaaggggghhhh!

PANEL TWO

Santini look at Midnighter from about three feet away.

SANTINI

Think about my offer. Your way, you're jerks who are stepping on the neck of the largest functioning Democracy on Earth. My way, you're heroes to 1.2 Billion people.

MIDNIGHTER

Hey Santini? Go... Fuck yourself.

PANEL THREE

Midnighter spits something white at Santini at Mach speed. Blur Flint's hand moving into frame.

MIDNIGHTER

F-toooh!

PANEL FOUR

Flint's hand is open. It's one of Midnighter's teeth.

SANTINI

A tooth? You dislodged one of your teeth with, what, your tongue?

SANTINI

That's pretty hardcore, guy. Does that mean you're turning down my offer?

PAGE 10

PANEL ONE

Midnighter smiles a crazy person smile. His upper front tooth is missing.

MIDNIGHTER
Come closer. I got 31 more teeth.

SANTINI
Tell you what... you discuss it with your partners once you come back from your trip.

PANEL TWO

Santini holds a huge electromagnet device up to Midnighter's head. He sneers, unafraid.

MIDNIGHTER
Some kind of death ray?

SANTINI
Naah. Giant Bulk Eraser. Gonna take care of your nanotech telepathy device. See, I don't want you teleporting out of where I'm sending you. I want you to get a nice walkabout.

PANEL THREE

Electrical discharge from the device into Midnighter's head. Like a bolt of lightning through his skull.

MIDNIGHTER
Fggggttttthhhk!

SANTINI
I think it might be a bit painful, sorry.

PANEL FOUR

Middy's stunned, but not out.

MIDNIGHTER
Uhhnnnn...

SANTINI
Okay, his radio is gone. Slingshot him.

PAGE 11

PANEL ONE

Alias stretches himself out like a slingshot, still holding Midnighter. Flint pulls him backwards...

MIDNIGHTER
Wha?

PANEL TWO

...and lets him go, flinging him through the air towards a Project Entry Portal.

MIDNIGHTER
Fuuu-

PANEL THREE

INSIDE PROJECT ENTRY PLANET - the sky is all red and burning. Two blue Project Entry holes float in mid-air, three meters from one another. Midnighter flies between them. The tops of palm trees are visible in the bottom of the panel.

BORDERLESS LOCATION CAPTION
Project Entry Universe
The Carribean

MIDNIGHTER
-uuuuuuuu-

PANEL FOUR

Tilt down to show SENATOR SONNY TERNS sitting next to DEADHEAD on a red, deserted southseas island, eating a coconut. Deadhead sits on the other side of the log, stripped of his tough-guy armor. In the water behind them is Dhul Fiqhar, the old man who is a superhuman activator.

SENATOR TERNS
And just WHAT the Sam Hill was that?

DEADHEAD
I dunno.

SENATOR TERNS
You want some coconut?

DEADHEAD
Hey, Senator Fuckface, how many times I gotta tell you I don't eat?

SENATOR TERNS
Fine, Ugly, just means more for me and the old man.

PAGE 12

PANEL ONE

Our Universe. China. A project entry portal open above a rice field. Midnighter comes flying out of it.

BORDERLESS LOCATION CAPTION
Xi'an, China

MIDNIGHTER
-uuuuckkkk!

PANEL TWO

Splashdown in the rice paddy, startling some nearby farmers.

MIDNIGHTER
Grrooph!

PANEL THREE

Midnighter is unconscious. A shadow falls across his face.

WATER BUFFALO
Mrrrrrrnnnnh.

PANEL FOUR

A Water Buffalo licks Midnighter's face, waking him up.

MIDNIGHTER
Uhr?

PANEL FIVE

Midnighter staggers to his feet, covered in mud, hanging onto the buffalo for support, dripping blood and gore from his punctured flesh. In the distance is a big Chinese Propaganda roadside sign.

MIDNIGHTER
China? Great. Just great.

MIDNIGHTER
Carrier, this is Midnighter. Apollo? Angie? Hawksmoor? Come in, somebody.

MIDNIGHTER
Christ, don't tell me I'm seriously going to have to walk out of China.

PAGE 13

PANEL ONE

Big splash panel. Venice, Italy. The big famous square. In the midground are Santini and Flint, dresssed as Geeky American Tourists. Santini wears khaki shorts, black socks pulled up to his knees, loafers, hawaiian shirt, black sunglasses, Yankees cap, huge camera. Flint: cut-off jeans showing her ass, belly shirt, heart-shaped sunglasses, Mets cap. Tourists are everywhere, dressed similarly. Work Jaeger and Galena into the crowd, but make it subtle.

BORDERLESS LOCATION CAPTION
Venice, Italy
Two weeks later

PANEL TWO

Close on Flint and Santini. Santini takes a photo of Flint with the church behind her.

SANTINI
Smile for the camera!

FLINT
I feel like an idiot.

SANTINI
And you look like one, too. And so do I.

MEDICI (O.S.)
Errr... Mister Santini?

PANEL THREE

Flint and Santini stare at to GIOVANNI MEDICI, a slick piece of Eurotrash in a $5000 Armani suit. Brunette Hair slicked back, beautiful features, he looks like an Italian underwear model. Tourists dressed like Santini mill all around them.

SANTINI
Signore Medici? Subtle suit. Way to blend in.
You trying to get us killed?

MEDICI
Sir, I assure you that my attire will not-

PANEL FOUR

C/U on Santini, angry but smiling (fake smile).

13 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
Look, friend, THE AUTHORITY has every single ATM camera, 7-11 security screen and traffic cam feed processing through their computers looking for my biometric facial data.

SANTINI
So when I ask you to dress up as a tourist to meet me, I mean JUST THAT. I don't mean "Dress up as a fuckhead, stand out like a sore thumb and see if you can get me killed." Get me?

PAGE 14

PANEL ONE

Medici takes of his jacket and tie, throwing them into a trash can.

MEDICI
I meant no disrespect. I will endeavor to follow your future orders to the letter.

SANTINI
Yeah, you do that. Assuming that I ever see you again. WHY are we here, anyway?

PANEL TWO

Medici rolls up his shirt sleeves up to the elbows. With his top two buttons unbuttoned, his hair toussled and his sleeves up, he looks even MORE like a gorgeous supermodel.

MEDICI
The United Nations has turned its back on you, The Authority will never stop hunting you, and your weaponry funding is gone.

MEDICI
Just because the world has lost its stomach, that does not mean that all of its members have. The work you do is essential. Someone must protect Humanity from the Overmen.

MEDICI
I represent a group which wishes to help you.

PANEL THREE

Santini shoves the camera into Medici's hands. Medici is nonplussed.

SANTINI
Here, blend. Take our photo in front of the bay.

PANEL FOUR

Santini and Flint pose in typical tourist poses, smiling. Medici takes their pictures.

SANTINI
Go on with your pitch... I'm broke and you people can help me... how? Money? Political cover? Weaponry?

MEDICI
All of this and more. Money most certainly.

14 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
How much?

MEDICI
Would you believe... unlimited money?

PANEL FIVE

A 3x5 photo of Flint and Santini, both of them struck dumb with amazement.

PAGE 15

PANEL ONE

Big Panel. The Bridge of Sighs, fog spreads over the water (see great photo on reference page). Santini and Medici lean out the windows on their elbows. Flint stands behind them, watching, standing like a silly teenager (body language is important). Gondolas go by below.

MEDICI
You have not said anything for ten minutes. I do not understand your hesitation.

SANTINI
I ask how much, you say NO LIMIT. That makes me wonder just who you are.

MEDICI
A consortium of wealthy, influential people who are afraid to see the rest of the world beneath The Authority's boot. Businessmen, statesmen, opinion makers.

SANTINI
Men with an agenda of their own for the world.

PANEL TWO

Frontal shot on the two men as they lean out the windows of the bridge, staring out at the water. Medici smiles.

MEDICI
What man does NOT have his own agenda for the world? I have found that the bigger the man, the bigger his agenda.

MEDICI
You, for instance, have just such an agenda.

SANTINI
I don't know what you mean.

MEDICI
Please, Colonel Santini, let us not waste one another's time. The mysterious deaths of the UN Special Security Council mere hours after you assumed control of StormWatch prove you have an agenda.

PANEL THREE

Santini smiles and hugs Flint.

15 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
The Special Security Council were murdered by Islamist Terrorists who attacked the United Nations. It was a great tragedy.

SANTINI
Any rumors that the SSC HIRED those Terrorists to attack the UN or that I executed the SSC in retribution are... well, I can’t imagine why people spread such malicious lies.

SANTINI
Now take our picture.

PANEL FOUR

Medici rolls his eyes.

MEDICI
Is this subterfuge still necessary? There is no one around.

PANEL FIVE

Santini smiles big.

SANTINI
What Subterfuge? These are our Honeymoon pictures.

PANEL SIX

Now it’s Medici’s turn to look utterly astounded.

MEDICI
You’re... married? I had... no idea.

PAGE 16

PANEL ONE

Santini and Flint look archly at Medici, smirking.

SANTINI
There's nothing like running for your life to make you realize that some things shouldn't be put off any longer.

SANTINI
Is that OKAY with YOU?

MEDICI
Uh, of course... it's just... err..

FLINT
Yes?

PANEL TWO

Medici looks down and away, unable to make eye contact.

MEDICI
Ms. Ngembe is a superhuman. How is it possible for the two of you to... to...

PANEL THREE

Flint smiles as she hugs her man.

FLINT
To knock boots?

SANTINI
Do the nasty?

FLINT
Bump uglies?

SANTINI
Put a round in the chamber?

FLINT
We're just very careful.

SANTINI
VERY, VERY Careful.

PANEL FOUR

Medici looks embarrassed. He hands Santini the camera, HIS HAND ON THE CAMERA'S BODY - Santini takes the camera BY THE STRAP (important later).

16 CONTINUED:

MEDICI
Forgive my rudeness. Your private life is none of my business.

SANTINI
Don’t worry, it’s the first question everyone asks. My Assistant refers to it as the “Woman of Steel, Man of Kleenex” Conundrum.

MEDICI
Of course. And my offer?

PAGE 17

PANEL ONE

Santini looks at Medici, suddenly serious.

SANTINI
I'm intrigued. I'll need a name, though. I can't afford to trust strangers just now.

MEDICI
Yes, of course. *In Hoc Signo Vinces.*

SANTINI
"In This Sign, Conquer?" I'm supposed to believe you're with the Knights Templar?

MEDICI
That is one name for our group, yes.

SANTINI
You realize that I'll have to meet THE HEIR, don't you? If I'm not convinced, then the deal's off.

MEDICI
I will make the arrangements. How does dinner at 8pm at Ristorante Antico Pignolo sound? I will bring you your proof and we will discuss a working arrangement.

SANTINI
Excellent.

PANEL TWO

They shake hands. See the reference page for the correct handshake, it's the "Pass Grip for a Master Mason." Santini raises his eyebrow as he shakes.

MEDICI
We meet on the level.

SANTINI
We part on the square.

PANEL THREE

Flint and Santini watch Medici walk away.

FLINT
Medici? You think he's related to the famous Medicis of old?

SANTINI
Maybe. That's why we brought Tefibi along.

17 CONTINUED:

FLINT
How is Tefibi going to be of any help? You just let Medici walk off.

PANEL FOUR

Santini holds up the camera BY THE STRAP, smiling HUGE. Flint smiles coyly at him.

SANTINI
Hell, woman, give me a little credit. Why do you think I had that boy rubbing his fingerprints all over our camera?

FLINT
That’s what I like the most about you, Ben: your evil, twisted brain. That, and a few other parts.

FLINT
Now let’s go back to the hotel and “Be Careful” with those parts.

SANTINI
Very careful. At least twice.

PAGE 18

PANEL ONE

Santini's Hotel Suite. It's really fancy.

Camera on Tefibi's back/side. In the foreground, KHALID TEFIBI wears a velour Adidas track suit with a Gilligan hat. Tefibi has a holographic virtual keyboard and mouse floating in front of him. On the opposite wall, he has removed the in-room painting and is using the entire wall as a display monitor. (be sure we can see the painting lying against the wall and the hook in the wall).

One of the graphics on the wall is of a complex family tree. Another is Medici's photo. A third is a surveillance photo of Ben, Flint and Medici meeting, taken from a great height somewhere. A fourth is the House of Medici coat of arms (six red dots on a yellow field - see reference page)

TEFIBI
Giovanni Basilio Medici. Born 1974, Venice. Educated at Eaton, Oxford, and The Sorbonne. Illigitimate descendant via a scullery maid of Gian Gastonne de' Medici, pederast, pervert, and last of the Medici Grand Dukes of Tuscanny. He lives off a trust fund, reasonable cash for a distant heir to big money.

SANTINI (O.S.)
Any accounts outside the trust?

TEFIBI
Yeah, I hacked three banks in the Caymans, came up with a hidden account receiving irregular payments from a series of shell corporations tracing back to something called The PFPUH Group. PFPUH?

PANEL TWO

Reverse shot. Camera on Tefibi's face in the foreground. He talks over his shoulder to Santini. In the midground behind Tefibi, Santini dresses in black pants and a light purple dress shirt, buttoning his sleeves.

SANTINI
Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum. It translates as "Defender of the Faith, for the Welfare of Humanity."

TEFIBI
Whatever THAT means. You took Latin in college?

18 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
St. Xavier Catholic High School. How easy was it to find those payments to Medici?

TEFIBI
Impossible. Maybe six people could have found it... me, Khartovsky, THE ENGINEER and three other people, two of which are in prison. Why?

PANEL THREE

Santini knots a dark purple tie to go over his light purple dress shirt. Behind him is a picture of some people taking a limping Jesus down from the Cross.

SANTINI
When I met with Medici, he led me to believe that our mysterious benefactors were the Knights Templar, the secretive religious military group who conquered Jerusalem during the Crusades and supposedly discovered the Holy Grail of Christ.

TEFIBI
Yeah, I saw the Indiana Jones movie. So what did these Templar guys do with the Grail?

SANTINI
Some say “The Grail” REALLY refers to the bloodline of Jesus Christ, who, contrary to public opinion, did not die on the cross, but lived to have kids who were taken to France by the Templars and their secret society buddies, the Prieure de Sion. These secret heirs to Christ’s blood and power are called The Merovingian Kings.

TEFIBI
This is giving me a headache.

PAGE 19

PANEL ONE

Santini smiles as he shoots his cuffs. Behind him now is a picture of the Knights of Malta in armor with their white cross on red cloaks.

SANTINI
Just wait, it gets better.

SANTINI
The Templars' biggest enemies were the Dominicans who ran the Inquisition and another secretive Religious Military Order who answer only to The Pope, The Knights of Malta. Between them, they stripped the Templars of their wealth and power and attempted to exterminate them all.

TEFIBI
So *THEY'RE* the bad guys?

SANTINI
Are they? The Prieure de Sion and the Knights Templar are supposedly working behind the scenes to place the Merovingians upon the throne of the World.

TEFIBI
So the Templars are the bad guys?

PANEL TWO

Behind Santini is the Freemasonry symbol, the compass and square.

SANTINI
Maybe they BOTH are. The Freemasons claim that the Knights of Malta have sworn an oath to stamp out liberalism, free thought, and restore the total reign of tyranny and superstition that existed in the dark ages.

TEFIBI
But they work for the Pope. Why would the Pope want the great-great-grandkids of Jesus dead?

SANTINI
I can't think of something which would undercut the Pope's claims to be the one true spokesman for Heaven more than having the decendants of Jesus walking around.

PANEL THREE

Tefibi has a pained look on his face.

19 CONTINUED:

TEFIBI
I hate this conspiracy bullshit. There's no way to figure out what's real and what's a load of crap, who the good guys and bad guys are.

SANTINI
Exactly. You're not supposed to think about it. It's complicated so that if someone brings it up, they'll be dismissed as a Conspiracy Nut.

TEFIBI
So what conspiracy do WE belong to?

PANEL FOUR

Santini stares at the picture of Medici, smiling.

SANTINI
Why Khalid, I thought you'd have figured it out by now.

SANTINI
What I can't figure out, though, is on which side of the fence THIS fellow is playing. He's getting paid by both the Templars and the Maltese and that's one paymaster too many.

TEFIBI
What are you going to do now?

SANTINI

NOW?

PAGE 20

PANEL ONE

Wide panel, big. Santini in a private room of a swanky restaurant, at a Dinner table with Medici and six wealthy guys in suits.

Set the shot up like The Last Supper.

Waiters buzz around the table, delivering food, wine, etc. It's a long, rectangular table, at one end, the middle seat is empty. Medici sits to Santini's left.

The waiters are Barak, Jaeger, Golovin and Pinckney, out of uniform, done up like servants in black pants, white coat and ties.

SANTINI (CAPTION)
I'm going to dinner.

MEDICI
Our guest of honor should be here soon, Colonel Santini.

SANTINI
Not to worry, I'm a patient man. I must admit, though, I'm intrigued. Is he truly-

PANEL TWO

A rich fella who looks a lot like Rupert Murdoch leans in close to Santini, gripping him on the arm.

MURDOCH
One Hundred and forty five generations removed... And yet, the power and the mystery remain! God's holiness and transcendence embodied in a human being!

SANTINI
I can't wait to meet him.

PANEL THREE

Santini takes a glass of water from Avi Barak (IMPORTANT LATER!). He doesn't seem to notice that it's Barak.

BARAK
Water, sir?

SANTINI
Thank you.

SANTINI
Now, as I was saying, I will need access to vast sums of money.

(MORE)

20 CONTINUED:

SANTINI (cont'd)

The type of weaponry my team will need to depose THE AUTHORITY will be very expensive. I will need a list of political contacts throughout Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. People whom you trust implicitly and who will obey me without question.

PANEL FOUR

Another guy further down the table who looks remarkably like Silvio Berlusconi smiles and leans forward.

BERLUSCONI

My dear Colonel, these things and more are our gift to you. We are a powerful group.

SANTINI

And the more powerful the men, the bigger the agenda.

BERLUSCONI

And there is no man more powerful than-

MEROVINGIAN (O.S.)

Gentlemen, my ears are burning.

PANEL FIVE

A bright light shines into the room from off-panel. Everyone turns around to see who’s off-panel. Santini smirks.

SANTINI

Speak of the Devil.

PAGE 21

PANEL ONE

It's the great-great-(x45)-grandson of Jesus. He should be dressed in a really expensive suit, long hair, pulled back from the forehead. He should look like THIS guy, but with a light brown-ish goatee.

http://www.hbo.com/films/angelsinamerica/img/photos/photo_prior_justice.jpg

The idea here is to make him look as much like Jesus as possible, but a rich creep Jesus.

MEROVINGIAN
Colonel Santini. I am Gauserand de Montpesant de Molay. I am descended from Theoderic, Dagobert, Clovis, and before them, the Word Made Flesh.

MEROVINGIAN
I am the Merovingian, the Heir to Christ, and I greet you in this, my time of need.

PANEL TWO

The men around Santini stare at him. He points at the Merovingian. Challenging.

SANTINI
You say you have the blood. Do you have the power?

MEROVINGIAN
Of course. Try your water.

PANEL THREE

Santini drinks from his glass.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

He stares at his glass... it is full of red wine.

SANTINI
Nice trick. Chateau Petrus... 1945?

MEROVINGIAN
1947. Only the best for our honored guest.

21 CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

C/Up. Santini sips from the wine again, only his eyes visible, narrowed with a sinister look.

SANTINI
Could you raise the dead?

MEROVINGIAN (O.S.)
I have, yes.

SANTINI
Good. Barak, do it.

PAGE 22

PANEL ONE

Thin, wide. The waiter's white-gloved hand fires a gun.

SOUND E/FX

KRAKK

PANEL TWO

Everyone recoils in horror from the body of Medici who now wears a bullet hole in the center of his head. All of the waiters now hold MP5's, Uzis, Scorpions and other small, vicious, machine pistols.

MEROVINGIAN
(big, jaggy font & balloon)
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS EFFRONTERY?

PANEL THREE

Small panel, wide, narrow. C/U on Santini, smiling.

SANTINI
As I said, nice trick with the wine, but I've played cards with Steve Forte and Ricky Jay. I can think of three ways off the top of my head to swap my glass of water for wine.

SANTINI
But if you can raise that boy from the dead, well, then I'll know that I'm talking to the real deal. And THEN we'll talk about me working with you.

SANTINI
But you'd better hurry up because if he's not up and singing Swanee River in 30 seconds, I'm going to have everyone in this room shot.

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Mysterium tremendum / means tremendous mystery, awesome strangeness, or dreadful majesty. God's holiness and transcendence and almighty power are the grounds of the dreadful majesty of God. Why is the Triune God dreadfully mysterious to us? Because He is divine and we are human. There is a yawning chasm that separates God and man. Christians of past ages were much more familiar with this aspect of God than we are today. When they contemplated the glory of the ascended Christ, they often spoke of Him as Rex tremendae majestatis /, "**KING OF DREADFUL MAJESTY.**"